



March 27, 2016

Mr. Tom Adams, Executive Director, Instructional Quality Commission  
 Mr. Bill Honig, Chair, History & Social Sciences Subject Matter Committee

Dear Tom and Bill,

On behalf of Bataan Legacy Historical Society and the Filipino American community, we want to thank you for your support and patience since 2014, when we began the process of implementing AB199 – to include the role of the Filipinos and WWII in the Philippines in the history social sciences curriculum framework. We truly appreciate your patience and your insight in guiding us through it.

Your extraordinary efforts on March 24 to champion our cause are testament to your commitment to include this seminal part of WWII history in the history curriculum for Grade 11 and partly for Grade 10. We thank you profusely for approving our recommendations to change “American soldiers and their Filipino allies” (Lines 703-704) into “American and Filipino soldiers in the United States Army (United States Army Forces in the Far East of USAFFE) as well as in adding the word “strategic” to Lines 705-706 to become “and made a strategic retreat to the jungles of Bataan Peninsula.”

As mentioned during the public comments, we have already received inquiries from different Filipino and American descendants’ organizations about our experience in this curriculum revision process as they wish to replicate this in their own states. They are looking to California to lead the way.

That is why we are vigilant about the curriculum framework’s accuracy. Even seemingly trivial mistakes like not having General Edward P. King’s full name or General MacArthur’s erroneous title during the Fall of Bataan will invite scrutiny not only from scholars but especially from the military. We must avoid using clichés like the famous line from General MacArthur’s “I shall return” speech. While the context of D-Day in Europe is taught, the bigger significance of the Fall of Bataan has been forgotten because it is only seen as a military defeat. Because of the Europe First Policy, the USAFFE troops were abandoned in Bataan. **“But despite suffering from massive diseases and starvation and fighting without any air support, they performed a delaying action that disrupted the timetable of the Imperial Japanese Army of 52 days, defending Bataan for 99 days”.**

But the most crucial point is that our young students must know the unvarnished truth for it is only in doing so can they learn the true lessons of war. The price of the freedom that we are enjoying today is quite steep and it is only fitting to honor the men and women who have sacrificed so much and continue to do so, to keep us safe in our shores. We can only honor them by telling the truth.

We have tried to limit our recommendations in accordance with the length of the CHSSP’s proposed text. If this is their only concern, then we can limit the text accordingly. **But this should not take precedence over the accuracy of the text.** We have cited our reasons and sources which have been approved by our Educational Advisory Group which includes 3 retired U.S. army generals (2 major generals and 1 brigadier general) who have also sent in their letters of recommendation.

We look forward to seeing the final text of the history curriculum framework that will be approved by the California State Board of Education. The real work lies ahead in the creation of a curriculum template as well as in its implementation. As we speak, we are preparing for this monumental task and greatly welcome your help and suggestions. Teaching the true lessons of war is the real testament to the sacrifices of our heroes. And you are making this a reality.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Cecilia I. Gaerlan  
Executive Director  
Bataan Legacy Historical Society  
(510) 520-8540

Al Perez, Bataan Legacy Historical Society  
President, Filipino American Arts Exposition  
Commissioner, San Francisco Entertainment Commission

Ruth Asmundson, Ph.D., Bataan Legacy Historical Society  
Former Mayor, City of Davis

Ray Cordoba, Bataan Legacy Historical Society  
Former Dean, Lowell High School, Vietnam Veteran

Robert Hansen, Bataan Legacy Historical Society  
U.S. Naval Order, San Francisco

Major (Retired) Rick Villarina, Bataan Legacy Historical Society

Manuel Bella, Bataan Legacy Historical Society  
San Francisco Unified School District (Retired)

Cc: Murray Navarro, President  
United Federation of Filipino-American Educators Sacramento and Vicinity Chapter

Judge (Retired) Betty O. Buccat

Laymon Jones

Major Gemma De Ocampo, U.S. Air Force

Jeanette Adi, Filipino American Arts Exposition

Mary Jean Allrey